

spring cleaning its not just for your house



with all of the talk about bail out packages, stimulus payments, and tax credits lately, I almost forgot what time of the year it is – spring cleaning time. You know the time of the year when we open the garage and drag everything out to the driveway, hose it all down or sweep it all off and then turn around and drag everything back in – just to turn around and do it again next year.

Maybe this year we should try something different. What if we actually take a look at all of our stuff and evaluate everything? Does everything need to be brought back in? Maybe some things need to be passed down, thrown away, fixed, or traded in for newer models. Maybe it's time to realize that you're never going to use that extra stack of scrap wood in the corner of the garage. Or what about all of those half empty cans of paint? Do you really think you'll ever use them? And it's definitely time to get rid of that box of clothes from college. Just admit it – you're never going to be a size 4 again.

If you think outside of the box, this train of thought can even be used when evaluating your financial “stuff” too. When is the last time you reviewed your estate plan? How long has it been since you increased the death benefit on your life insurance plan? Do you even remember who you named as beneficiary on those plans? Do you still participate in your Wellness program at work? Can you even remember the last time you made an extra contribution to your IRA or 401k account?

Why not get in the habit of making spring the time of the year to give your financial matters a little attention too? Make an appointment with your financial advisor to review your portfolio. Be sure that you've properly allocated your funds so your money is earning as much as possible. What about a meeting with your attorney to look over your estate planning documents? Those documents should be reviewed periodically as the laws and your personal situations change. Be sure to remove an ex-spouse as your beneficiary or he/she will be entitled to those accounts upon your death. Just because you're not married anymore doesn't mean they won't receive those monies. You have to update your documents to be in control of where your money goes.

Why not make today the day to get back on track with your company's Wellness plan? If your company doesn't have a Wellness plan, why not start one of your own? Grab a couple of co-workers over the lunch hour and hit the mall for a little mall walking. Or start a lunch club where each person brings a healthy snack or treat each day to share. Why not start a “biggest loser” competition of your own in the office?

Spring cleaning doesn't have to be all work. Let's broaden the definition of spring cleaning to include our health and financial well being.